

## SP-R1 Public and Private Vehicular Access

*October 25, 2002*

### 1.0 Introduction/Background

Ensuring vehicular access to recreation facilities, areas, and trailheads is an important part of recreation management in the Study Area. This study will determine the extent to which private and public vehicle access routes are facilitating or restricting visits to the Lake Oroville area.

### 2.0 Study Objective

The main objective of this study is to identify the opportunities for and constraints to public and private vehicular access to Study Area land and water resources. This study focuses on roads within the Study Area. Examination of regional transportation links will be conducted in SP-R14—Assess Regional Recreation and Barriers to Recreation. The effects of future development and project operations on public access will be investigated.

### 3.0 Relationship to Relicensing/Need for the Study

This study is needed to meet the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission's (FERC's) direction to ensure public access. Specifically, FERC guidelines state that the licensee shall "make provisions for adequate public access to such project facilities and waters" (Part 2, Subchapter A, Chapter One, Section 2.7 of 18 CFR).

The purpose and need for the study is to address Issue Statement 1—adequacy of recreation project facilities, opportunities, and access to accommodate current use and future demand. It will examine vehicular access to recreation areas and facilities within the Study Area.

This study addresses Issue Statement R1—adequacy of recreation project facilities, opportunities, and access to accommodate current use and future demand. It specifically addresses Issues RE 1, 2, 5-17, 19-39, 55, 56, 60, 64-83, 95, 96, 104, 105, 118-130, 132-145, 147, 150, and 151.

### 4.0 Study Area

The Study Area includes Lake Oroville, the lands and waters within and adjacent to (1/4 mile) the FERC project boundary, and adjacent lands, facilities and areas with a clear project nexus.

#### *Campgrounds*

Bidwell Canyon Campground	Floating Campsites
Bloomer Cove Boat-In Campsite (BIC)	Lime Saddle Campground
Bloomer Knoll BIC	Lime Saddle Group Campground

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Bloomer Point BIC	Loafer Creek Campground
Bloomer Group BIC	Loafer Creek Group Campground
Craig Saddle BIC	Loafer Creek Horse Campground
Foreman Creek BIC	Oroville Wildlife Area (OWA) (Larkin Road Camping Area)
Goat Ranch BIC	North Thermalito Forebay RV “en route” Campground

***Day Use Areas (DUAs)***

Lake Oroville Visitor Center	Saddle Dam DUA
Lime Saddle DUA	North Thermalito Forebay DUA
Bidwell Canyon DUA	South Thermalito Forebay DUA
Loafer Creek DUA	Thermalito Afterbay DUA (off Highway 162)
Oroville Dam Overlook Area	Thermalito Afterbay Wilbur Road DUA
Spillway DUA	Thermalito Afterbay Larkin Road DUA
	Burma Road and Lakeland Boulevard DUA

***Boat Launches***

Lime Saddle Boat Launch Area (BLA)	Foreman Creek Car-Top BLR
Loafer Creek BLA	Dark Canyon Car-Top BLR
Bidwell Canyon BLA	Stringtown Car-Top BLR
Enterprise Boat Launch Ramp (BLR)	Vinton Gulch Car-Top BLR
Nelson Bar Car-Top BLR	Thermalito Afterbay (4)
South Thermalito Forebay	North Thermalito Forebay
Diversion Pool-Burma Road and RR Grade	

***Other Recreational Facilities with Project Nexus***

Lime Saddle Marina	Bidwell Marina
Floating Restrooms	Aquatic Center
Brad P. Freeman Trail	Feather River Hatchery
Lake Oroville State Recreation Area	Clay Pit State Vehicular Recreation Area (SVRA)
(LOSRA) Hiking/Equestrian Trail	Model Aircraft Flying Area
Diversion Pool	OWA

Dispersed use areas along the upstream and downstream reaches of the Feather River

## **5.0 General Approach**

### **Task 1—Research Public Access Inventory**

Current public access will be identified and assessed by driving and walking through roads open to the public within the Study Area. Particular attention will be paid to Study Area shoreline access opportunities and

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constraints. Mapping (GIS) will be used to identify developed recreational facilities, informal recreation areas, formal and informal parking areas, roads, and resource and other access constraints to shoreline and waters within the Study Area.

Study Area information, in the form of GIS data layers, will be provided by the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) or the California Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR).

Part of this task will include an evaluation of parking at smaller BLRs. This evaluation is considered an access issue because if parking is too scarce, it limits access to some of the small BLRs. At these smaller ramps, parking may be located quite a distance from the water, thus a lack of parking may constitute an access issue.

### Task 2—Current Access Assessment

Public access areas within the Study Area will be evaluated using three ratings: high, medium, and low accessibility to the public (with standard passenger automobile). The ratings are defined as follows:

- High: Existing road(s) in good to adequate condition
- Medium: Existing roads in poor condition
- Low: No roads

Ratings will also include the type of road surface (e.g., paved, gravel, or dirt). This may be useful in developing cost estimates for various road improvements. Particular attention will be paid to Study Area shoreline access opportunities and constraints. Areas currently considered to have difficult access such as Craig Saddle, will be evaluated. Potential new alignments that could facilitate use of areas that are currently inaccessible will be noted. Criteria for each rating will be defined and include ease of access and obstacles encountered at each location, perceived or otherwise. A descriptive analysis will then summarize areas to which the public currently has reasonable access.

### Task 3—Research Future Development Effects on Public Access

Researchers will solicit input from DWR, DPR, the California Department of Fish and Game (DFG), the United States Forest Service (USFS) and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to determine planned future recreation developments. This will include consideration of interim recreation projects. This task will follow the same methodology as Task 2, but will assess planned development. Planned recreation development areas to which the public will have reasonable access will be summarized. Planned highway projects, such as extending Grand Avenue to Highway 99, enhancing Highway 70, upgrading Ophir Road, and widening Highway 162 will also be evaluated and summarized.

### Task 4—Research Access During the Next License Period

Existing and planned public access areas within the Study Area will be evaluated using the same methodology as Tasks 2 and 3, but will take into consideration recreation use levels affecting the next license period. Researchers will also solicit additional information from the Butte County Public Works Department, Caltrans, DWR, DPR, the California Department of Fish and Game (DFG), the United States Forest Service (USFS), and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) about public access factors affecting the project during

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the next license period. Criterion for each rating will be defined and will include ease of access and obstacles encountered at each existing and planned location, perceived or otherwise. Areas to which the public will likely have reasonable access during the term of the next license will be described and summarized.

## **6.0 Results and Products/Deliverables**

### ***Results***

This study will identify vehicular access in its current condition, and determine whether or not it is a barrier to recreation visits to the Study Area. Where barriers are identified, the research team will make recommendations for addressing or removing them. Additionally, the study will address access needs during the next license period to facilitate increased demand for recreation activities.

### ***Products/Deliverables***

The following products will be developed for this study:

- Draft Final Report
- GIS-based maps

The report will include an executive summary; an introduction; objectives; methods; results; and recommendations to improve or change access for current and future recreation demand. The GIS-based maps will display areas that need improved access.

## **7.0 Coordination and Implementation Strategy**

### ***Coordination with Other Resource Areas/Studies***

This study will require coordination with SP-R9—Existing Recreation Use; SP-R10—Recreation and Facility Condition Inventory; SP-R12—Projected Recreation Use; SP-R14—Assess Regional Recreation and Barriers to Recreation; and SP-R15—Recreation Suitability.

### ***Issues, Concerns, Comments Tracking, and/or Regulatory Compliance Requirements***

This study addresses Issue Statement R1—adequacy of existing project recreation facilities, opportunities, and access to accommodate current use and future demand. It specifically addresses issues RE 1, 2, 5-17, 19-39, 55, 56, 60, 64-83, 95, 96, 104, 105, 118-130, 132-145, 147, 150, and 151.

## **8.0 Study Schedule**

Data collection: June 2002 through August 2002.

Data analysis and report writing: September 2002 through January 2003.

Draft Final Report due: February 2003.